

AVP-AUSTRALIA 2006 STATE REPORTS

AVP QUEENSLAND

As usual this has been a busy year for Alternatives to Violence Project Qld (AVPQ). We continue to run workshops in the community, the prisons and schools. We have run all three levels of community workshops and have gained facilitators; although not as many as we need; as some of our facilitating team are no longer available. The prison workshops have been very successful with many inmates completing all three levels and some going on to become apprentice facilitators. Help Increase Peace Project (HIPP) has had many successful workshops in schools so the message is reaching more young people.

We have held facilitators' training days that gives an opportunity to work out any problems, as well as an opportunity to meet and learn from other facilitators. We also had a weekend training workshop run by a professional; this was open to all members. It was very informative and has helped us put some strategies in place. We also started a 'Fourth Friday' each month; where all members can meet informally; this is also open to non-members who wish to know more about AVPQ.

Dorothy, Secretary AVPQ

AVP NEW SOUTH WALES

In this the 14th year of AVP(NSW) five groups continue to run experiential conflict transformation workshops with a variety of communities across NSW.

Sydney, Newcastle and the Blue Mountains Community Groups

- Basic, Advanced and Training For Facilitators (T4F) workshops
- Monthly First Friday gatherings are held at the Devonshire Street Meeting House to build community with facilitators, workshop graduates, Transforming Conflict students and interested visitors
- Interfaith workshops in Darwin, with a Fairfield youth group and a planned workshop at Cronulla
- Some promotional mini workshops including some for the NSW Reconciliation Council

Help Increase the Peace (HIP) School Group

- Workshops are being held in a number of Sydney and Canberra schools
- A new school program is being developed in the Inner Western Sydney in partnership with the Arab Council of NSW
- An ongoing program of HIP workshops for teachers is increasing the spread of AVP/HIP experiential style of nonviolence learning
- The new Rainbow Circles workshops on coping with grief and loss have been added to the HIP workshops being run for students and staff.

Prison Group

- Regular workshop programs are being held in Lithgow, Bathurst, Junee and the new Dillwynnia Women's Prison in Windsor
- Regular workshop program is being held in Lithgow with parolees and partners.

Other Activities

- Ongoing program of advanced facilitator training / mentoring opportunities with workshops and training manuals
- AVP-Australia National Gathering was held in Sydney in 2006 and is planned for Sydney in 2007
- Three NSW AVP facilitators attended the AVP International Conference in South Africa
- AVP(NSW) is supporting AVP facilitators who are running workshops in Papua New Guinea and Northern Ireland
- Transforming Conflict classes continue to be held across TAFE NSW and other parts of Australia and Papua New Guinea. It is expected that this will expand after recent enquiries from overseas.

Katherine AVP (NSW)

AVP(NSW) Blue Mountains & Prison Groups

This has been an extraordinarily busy year for the prison programme. It began with a gift of \$1000 from the Junee Correctional Centre Prisoner's Fund to the work of AVP due to the fact that one of our inmate facilitators had been moved there. We now have had three workshops there, a Basic, an Advanced and a T4F.

We have continued our workshops at Bathurst and Lithgow Correctional Centres and to our delight have added the new Women's Centre, Dillwynnia, at Windsor. We were approached this year by the Parole Board to run AVP with Parolees and people on community and other court orders. We have run three Basics with them and a fourth one, an Advanced, is in the pipeline. We are about to do our second workshop at Dillwynnia.

We have about 45 inmate facilitators around the state of NSW and we now have six outmate facilitators cleared to work in jails with another three undergoing checking. This takes time! As well I have been invited onto a working group to advise the Department of Corrective services on courses for jails.

Working with men and women in the Blue Mountains community has also been worthwhile with two Basics and two Advanced workshops this year.

In the jails we meet a wonderful range of people of many ethnic backgrounds and ages. Our inmate facilitators do wonderful work and we have been informed by one jail that our graduates are far less likely to attract charges. Most of those chosen for peer support work in one jail are men who have done AVP. It is rewarding and challenging. Give International our love and peaceful greetings.

Sabine, Co-ordinator of Jail Programs in NSW

AVP SOUTH AUSTRALIA

AVP is hanging on in SA, but only just. Some facilitators have stepped back from AVP this year for a number of reasons. However, we were delighted to welcome Emma and Stephen to our small facilitation team this year. Geoff has updated our spot on the national website, and we have had a few requests from this source.

In January we had a request from a former participant, Kimberley, to address a group of Lifeline volunteers at one of their regular training sessions. Jo spoke about AVP to about 50 volunteers one evening in February and invited those who heard the talk to register their interest. About 25 people left contact details and from that list all were invited to register for a Basic Workshop. Additional planning and promotion resulted in a Basic workshop in May.

We continued advertising and promoting for a subsequent Basic workshop in July, but it was cancelled because the numbers were too low. One very pleasant outcome from our efforts this year is that the initial group at the Basic workshop in May is continuing to meet informally every two months, on their own initiative.

An interesting development this year has been the emergence of a program of workshops and training sessions offered by Pace e Bene. Jo was impressed by the workshop she attended in DecOS at the Catholic Education Office. It was facilitated by Ken from California and another workshop in May was facilitated by Brendan from Perth. The organisation is Franciscan in origin and workshops are promoted through the SA Council of Churches as well as the Catholic Education Office and Catholic churches. The structure of workshop is very different, with a single facilitator rather than a team of volunteers, and the underlying spiritual base is broadly Catholic. However, there are many areas of overlap in content and in aim with AVP. We have found the text book *Engage* produced by Pace e Bene an excellent resource.

Where do we go from here?. Sometimes we feel we don't have the energy to continue, and perhaps it's time call it a day, at others we seem to find just enough to hang in there.

Jo, AVP-SA

AVP VICTORIA

Four workshops have been held since November, 2005, one Basic, two Advanced and one Training for Facilitators (T4F).

Three of the young Muslim women, who were part of the AVP Interfaith workshops, have continued their involvement in these community workshops, and we have been greatly enriched by their participation.

The T4F held in September means that we now have an additional six possible trainee facilitators, all of whom have connections to our Regional Meeting, to add to the current five in Victoria. We are also hopeful that there might be fresh energy and enthusiasm to undertake the organization of further community workshops, through new people coming onto our committee.

Ray, Lou, Bev

AVP WEST AUSTRALIA

AVPWA has had its eleventh year since workshops began. We held a total of fifteen workshops during the year, nine in prisons, six in the community. The program is working well in the men's prison where we have a dedicated band

of inmate facilitators, who enrich the experience for all concerned. As well as the workshops we have two training days for facilitators each year. On these occasions 'out mate' [non inmate] facilitators are invited to participate, giving the inmates a further sense of integration, and being part of our community. We also have an end-of-year gathering open to anyone who has done a workshop with us.

The women's prison program was not quite so smooth this year mostly due to smaller numbers to draw from with more frequent turnovers in the prison population, and with venue problems.

An Interfaith workshop was held during November 2005. We felt that it is so important during these troubled times, for people of different faiths to get together to create understanding and respect. This is an area we hope to extend. We held several other community workshops.

It was a challenging year for HIPP. It has been difficult to focus attention on this area of activity, so have not been able to work in as many schools as we had hoped. We had two representatives at the national gathering in NSW and three at the international gathering in South Africa.

With the current level of energy and expertise in the group, we can look forward to another successful year. We know that AVP is a good package and feel committed to it. We are looking at ways to freshening up our approach to find ways to attract more people and establish links. We have a regular newsletter and our own website. We now have an experienced project officer and consultant to help us extend our message and consider how best we can develop the program in the community.

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN AUSTRALIA INC, 2006, Documents in Advance: Yearly Meeting 6-13 January 2007 The Friends School, Hobart, <http://www.quakers.org.au/files/DIA07.pdf>, visited 21/1/07]